

Divorce in Albanian society, its causes and consequences

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ABSTRACT

The family is the foundation of a society and if the family is healthy, society will be healthy. If we analyze Albanian society for 30 years of transition, we will notice that the number of divorces in the family has been increasing. Regarding this phenomenon, a study was conducted which analyzes several causes and consequences of divorce. The analysis emphasizes the right of spouses, especially women, to seek divorce. The data indicate that women requested the most significant number of divorces. The data were obtained from the Institute of Statistics and the Ministry of Justice. The methodology used is descriptive analysis. A questionnaire was organized to study the divorce problem with 569 people who belonged to different social strata, statuses, education, areas, gender and ages. The study analyzes this phenomenon, the reasons why the number of divorces has increased and its consequences for Albanian society. Finally, recommendations are given regarding this phenomenon. Increasing the role of the family, society and media in the education of the younger generation will minimize the problem of divorce.

Keywords: divorce; social study;

Introduction

A healthy younger generation grows up in a healthy family and society. The family is sacred and each other's thoughts should be respected and understood. If the couple undertakes to create a family, respect, love, understanding, sincerity, tolerance for each other should be the family's foundation. Marriage should be an institution of free love and voluntary, but not of interest. In the last year in our country, the concept of family and the family itself has been going through a major crisis. Social and economic changes created a new family model, which has nothing of the traditional.

Postmodern times have brought the risk of an unclean marriage model with a pragmatic character, which has led to conflicting or consensual divorce. Marriage is a responsibility, respect, mutual love, which leads to happiness. The family and society should not impose on individuals in their choices and decisions. They need to be free and take all the time they need to make the right marriage decision. This is also expressed in the Family Code in Article 50, which states that "Obligation for fidelity, assistance and cooperation" states that "By marriage, husband and wife enjoy the same rights and assume the same obligations. From marriage arises the mutual obligation for fidelity, for moral and material help, for cooperation in the interest of family and cohabitation".

So the spouses themselves and society must use all possible ways to save the marriage from divorce. Based on statistical data released by INSTAT and the Ministry of Justice, it results that one of the problems that Albanian society has today is divorce. The data shows that for 2019 there were 21.6 divorces in 100 marriages. We must emphasize that the problem of divorce nowadays is not only a problem in Albanian society. This is a global problem.

According to the 2019 UNIDOMO questionnaire, Luxembourg led the list of European countries with the highest divorce rate per 100 marriages with 89 divorces, followed by Portugal with 61.4 divorces, Finland with 59.9 divorces and Spain with 55.5 divorces. All four countries boasted a significantly higher share of divorced marriages in 2019 than the reported European average of 42.8 per 100 (22 countries reported in 2019).

The divorce proceedings begin with a request made by the party seeking the divorce, which can be both husband and wife. Under article 134, "Attempts at reconciliation" of the Family Code, it is stated that "In reviewing a lawsuit for the intents of an impending divorce, the court first schedules a reconciliation hearing, where the spouses are supposed to appear in person. The judge may choose to hear them separately and then in a joint session, without the presence of their legal representatives. If this process turns out to be a failure, the court rules in favor of the couple's divorce

and both spouses are asked to provide information about their assets. They are informed of the obligations they have to fulfill towards their children as well as of the incomes and the expenses they have to attend to.

Under article 154 of the Family Code, "Consequences of marriage dissolution for children," it is stated that "Divorce dissolution does not affect the rights and obligations that parents have towards their children, except in cases as being provided in this Code" According to applicable law the mother takes care of the child until the age of 14, so the father is obliged to pay a certain amount of money that will go towards the child's upbringing. The meetings are set when the spouse will be meeting the child".

If the marriage does not last and the couple finds divorce, both have obligations to the child as financial obligations and their education. This is reflected in Article 158 of the Family Code, which states: "The parent, upon whom the education and upbringing of the child have not been granted, reserves the right to supervise the maintenance and education of the child and consequently should be informed and consulted upon important choices related to his life. He contributes his share relative to his income and those of the other parent. The right to visit and residence, as stipulated under the conditions as determined by the court, cannot be denied, except for serious reasons deemed to harm the child's interests ".

Assess the divorce rate in Albania

Specific objectives

1. To analyze the causes of divorce in the Albanian society.
2. To analyze the consequences of divorce in the Albanian society.
3. To analyze the role of family and society in reducing divorce in the Albanian family.

Results

The increase of divorce's number is one of the main problems of the Albanian family today.

Table 1: Number of marriages and divorces per year

Year	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of marriages in years	28992	26989	25820	21795	25428	24997	22562	22641	23104	22415
Number of divorces in years	2675	2331	2168	3929	3478	3761	4345	4508	4846	5860
Number of divorces per 100 marriages	9.2	8.6	8.4	18.0	13.7	15.0	19.3	19.9	21	26.1

Source: INSTAT

If we analyze the table according to INSTAT data, we notice that the number of divorces in Albania has increased. The data from the table show that in the last ten years, from 3478 in 2010, their number has reached 5860 in 2019. The number of divorces per 100 marriages has also increased, almost doubled from 2010. The figures show that from 13.7 divorces per 100 marriages in 2010, in 2019, it reached 26.1. So in 2019, INSTAT reported 26.1 divorces per 100 marriages, one of the highest figures during these 30 years of transition. In the dictatorship system, the dissolution of marriages has been very low.

According to the data, in the 80s, marriage dissolution was one of the lowest globally, with 86 solutions per 1000 marriages. This result may be related to the fact that, generally, the dictatorship system did not allow marriage dissolution. There is also another fact that young people, when they have problems before going to court, go to the Youth organizations, Front, Women, who tried to resolve disagreements and not reach a divorce.

To analyze this phenomenon in detail, we conducted a survey with 569 people, of which 183 of the responses belonged to males and 386 to females, or 32.2% males and 67.8% females. The survey was conducted with age groups from 20 to over 50 years and it resulted that 191 were aged 20-30 years, 111 were aged 30-40 years, 112 were aged 40-50 years and 151 were over 50 years. Of the responses resulted that 57% of them had higher education, 39% had secondary education, and 4% had eight-year education. Regarding employment, 52% were employed, 19% were self-employed, 7% unemployed, 22% were retired. Regarding the status of the respondents, it results that 61% of them were married, 31% single, 4% divorced and 2% widowed. Four hundred seventy-three of the respondents lived in the city, 93 in the countryside.

Regarding the years of marriage, the results showed that 184 respondents were single, 231 respondents had been married for more than 15 years, seven persons had been married 15 years old, 60 persons had been married ten years old, 41 persons had been married for five years, 21 persons had been married for three years and 24 persons had been married for two years.

Another question was if they felt good about their marriage. The answers show that 351 individuals felt well with their marriage, while 218 persons did not feel well. Regarding the question if you respect or not your partner and how much you respect him/her, 185 refused to answer. Of 384 persons, 222 said they respected their spouse highly, 98 satisfactory, 50 sufficient and 14 had little respect.

The high number of divorces indicates that the family today is not stable. Regarding the question of how stable the family is today, the respondents were offered several choice alternatives, very stable, less stable and unstable. Most of them, 72%, think that the family is less stable nowadays, 19% unstable and 9% very stable. As we can see from the answers, the opinion about the stability of the family nowadays is that it is less stable and this was expressed by 72% of the respondents.

Studies for divorce and organized surveys indicate that there are several causes for divorce:

- Economic reasons, the problematic 30-year period of transition was accompanied by rising unemployment and this is one of the causes of divorce, especially among young couples. In the survey of 204 respondents, about 36% of respondents admitted this fact. In the comments they made at the end of the survey, it is said that with the income received, they cannot afford to live, leading to divorce. The respondents' opinion is that problems can be solved despite the economic problems that a family may have if there is love between the couple, respect, and gratitude for each other.
- Nowadays, there is a tendency to take the partner with the same cultural level. The facts indicate that the desired level has not been reached yet. The cultural disparity among young people is another reason for divorce, confirmed by 11% of respondents and by the comments they have made regarding this question.
- In marital relationships, there are also relationships with matchmaking, recommendation, which, even though they are reduced, 8% of respondents accept as a reason for divorce.
- Physical, psychological, or emotional abuse is one of the leading causes of divorce and it is acknowledged by 37% of respondents.
- Age differences between partners are another cause of divorce. Although nowadays, this difference tends to decrease, it still exists as a problem. This fact was accepted by 6% of respondents.
- One of the main reasons for divorce is adultery. This is related to the transition period we are going through but also to the growth of information technology, where through social networks, young people make new acquaintances and separate from their current partners. Since men betray women, some of them go with other men as revenge on men. Thus, adultery is accepted by about 35% of respondents.
- Conflicts between the mother-in-law and the bride in the family are another cause of the high number of divorces. This fact was accepted by 8% of respondents. As a result of low income or unemployment, the couple cannot buy a house and live apart from their parents. This creates problems between the generations in the family, brings conflict and leads to divorce.

- As a result of unemployment, stress, men become addicted to alcohol, drugs that cause problems and domestic violence and women are forced to seek divorce. This cause is expressed by about 33% of respondents.
- The tendency in today's society is for young people to get married at the right age, but this occurs because of economic conditions, family problems, women forced to marry at a young age. This means that they don't have the proper maturity; they cannot solve family problems and seek divorce. 13% of respondents admit that early marriage is a cause for divorce.
- Today, domestic violence, even murder, is the biggest problem in Albanian society. This comes from various factors, economic, social, stress, drinking alcohol, etc. 33% of respondents emphasize this phenomenon. Problems in the family arise from genesis. If a child grows up in a violent and unloving family, the predisposition to create such a family is high. The concept of family has been created since childhood; this family model is predisposed to be created.
- Conflicts between the mother-in-law and bride in the family, addiction to alcohol, drugs and gambling, forced marriage at an early age, domestic violence, emigration, increasing the position of women in society, these causes were given as stand-alone alternatives in the survey. The last alternative was if all these factors affect together and 30% of respondents thought so.
- Immigration, after the 90s, with the advent of democracy, resulted in a good part of Albanians going to work abroad. The desire for a better life for economic income forced men to go to Greece, Italy, England, Germany, etc. A part of them left their family and got involved in the societies of these countries, emancipating themselves and increasing the level of culture. In order to obtain a residence permit, some men were forced to connect with other women in these countries. They got married or cohabited there and left the family, which led to an increase in the number of divorces. About 7% of respondents highlighted this phenomenon.
- Another reason for divorce is the increase in the position of women in society. This happens because the spouses' level is not the same, and he feels inferior or for reasons of jealousy, etc. 4% of respondents highlighted this phenomenon.

In analyzing this phenomenon, we will consider several factors:

1. Awareness of women, the transition from dictatorship to democracy, brought that people have more rights and freedoms, and the growth of a democratic culture of society as a whole, and women in particular. As a result, women became more aware of divorce.

Before the 1990s, the number of divorces was low. The woman found it difficult to dissolve the marriage in the dictatorial system because the state and its organizations forced her not to. However, even if the marriage dissolution occurred, she felt ashamed, although she could not be at fault. Today, women have become more aware that if they see that marriage cannot be continued, they seek marriage dissolution.

Nowadays, a good part of Albanian society sees divorce as an increase in women's rights to the injustices done to them. So if previously public opinion could prejudice the woman for the separation she made from the man, now this opinion has a positive spirit (changed for the better), considering divorce as a legitimate right of the woman in case she demands it.

Of 569 respondents, 478 persons, 84% of respondents expressed that divorce is the right solution for a bad marriage, and 90 persons, 16%, expressed against it.

Another survey question had to do with whether the respondents thought that the increase in the number of divorces was a degree of emancipation. From 568 answers to this question, 348 persons or 61% answered that it indicates a degree of emancipation, while 220 persons or 38% don't agree. We must emphasize that this degree of emancipation is mainly in the city because, in the village, there is still the patriarchal concept that "the man is the backbone of the house" and the woman must obey him.

When asked if divorced people in Albania feel prejudiced, 69.8% think that divorced people feel prejudiced, and 30.2% think that divorced people do not feel prejudiced. One of the questions was whether they thought family

disputes could be resolved without reaching divorce. To this question, 93% answered that family disputes could be resolved without reaching divorce and 7% think that they cannot be resolved without reaching divorce. Regarding whether the spouses should have cooperated more in order not to reach the marriage dissolution, 84% answered positively and 16% negatively.

Another point addressed in the survey is that family disputes can be resolved through tolerance or imposition. 93.3% of persons answered that family disputes are resolved with tolerance and 6.7% think they are resolved by imposition.

2. Economic conditions in previous years, some women, had no financial income, so they were forced to support their husbands even though they could be mistreated or betrayed. This is because they could not afford to live for themselves and their children. Last year, due to the employment of some women in both the public and private sector, the number of divorces had increased, and women are becoming more and more aware of this problem.

Divorce has many consequences, which can be economical and psychological for spouses and children.

Economic consequences resulting from divorce: some women lose their jobs; some men do not even pay the child support they have to pay according to the law. Some women are left homeless and forced to return to their parents to raise children.

Psychological consequences, psychological stress, regardless of separation with tolerance or not, both spouses suffer. After divorce, most spouses find it difficult to make life alone, burdened with work and stress.

Studies indicate that "Divorced individuals, compared to their married counterparts, have higher levels of psychological distress, substance abuse, and depression and lower levels of overall health ([Amato, 2000](#); [Hughes & Waite, 2009](#)).

The reality indicates that even though they are divorced, the spouses exert psychological violence on the spouses and some of them do not give even the financial obligation. However, the court has imposed on them an obligation for their child. The biggest consequences of divorce suffer the children, especially when they are little. Due to the lack of cooperation between ex-spouses after divorce, children often become part of the crime, which has a range of consequences in their lives. In the survey, the question if divorce affects the child's psychology, the vast majority of respondents, 93%, answered that divorce affects the psychology of the children, but 7% of them answered that it does not affect.

A new psychology that has society today concerning young people is the couple's cohabitation. This is also contained in the Family Code, Article 163 "Meaning of cohabitation," which states that "Cohabitation is a factual union between a man and a woman living as a couple, characterized by life shared together, which is regarded to be a manifestation of stability and endurance."

The social opinion, this is a positive phenomenon, because young people live together as a couple; they know each other better during this period and after several years of living together, they start a family. The question of marriage or cohabitation is better, resulting in the majority of respondents, 326 of the 57%, though that cohabitation is a better form than marriage. In contrast, 242 of them, 43%, think the opposite. The state's role is crucial to reducing the number of divorces and strengthening the family. This would be realized first of all by increasing the well-being of the people and reducing poverty. Society plays a key role, but today, Albanian society itself is not oriented in all this transition period. Even the company they had struck up when living in the same neighborhood, people do not have today for many reasons. The school has an important role in educating young people to build a healthy family based on mutual trust and love. If we want a healthy family, children must be educated because a part of young people tend to grow economically in a short time and do not reach with clean work. This makes that they don't know the rules in the family because, in their case, the rules put money. While the family has difficulties educating the children, the solution is their inclusion in extracurricular courses and activities. Both parents must be activated for children's education, and they should not differentiate them.

Another question addressed in the survey is who can play a role in strengthening the family. The respondents were given several alternatives: government, media, society, non-profit organizations, or all alternatives together. It results that 276 persons, 49% think that all four factors influence together, 157 think that society influences, 72 think about the media, 55 think about the government, and nine people think about Non-Profit Organizations.

The media plays an important role, but in this period of transition, a part of it did not play a positive role. On the contrary, through different films or shows, some media did not educate young people about the creation of a healthy family, but in some cases have given opposite messages. In the survey on the question: Do you think that the role of the media in strengthening the family and society has increased in the transition period very, satisfactory, sufficient, little, 47% of them answered little, 30% sufficient, 12% satisfactory and 11% too much. Most of the respondents in the comments they made emphasized that the role of the media in strengthening the family has been weakened. According to them, very few programs address family problems in the media.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Compared to the dictatorial system where a woman could have justly divorced her husband, felt ashamed and underestimated by society, today's society has reached a degree of civilization. It does not prejudge it, which is expressed in the increase in the number of divorces of females.
2. The government should design programs to increase people's well-being in order not only to avoid divorce for economic reasons but also for parents to have more time available for the education of their children.
3. Nowadays, the role of the family has diminished, both from families that have difficult living conditions and from families that have good conditions and are engaged in business. Both types devote little time to educating the children about the values they should have in society to create stable connections in the family. In their opinion, they leave this task only to the school.
4. The media ought to treat more family problems, make a detailed analysis of divorce, and provide educational programs for young people to create a stable family.

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